Conduct of war, J.F.C.Fuller, 1961

It is a study of the way in which political and economic changes since the French Revolution have altered both the techniques and the aims of war, and its theme is that a war which is not fought in pursuance of a clear and feasible policy will always end in disaster. Within a generation Europe has suffered two wars, bouth fought to secure peace, both ending in a situation more unstable and threatening than before. Nothing is more important than to understand the relation of war and policy, to know what can and cannot be achieved by force of arms and to take account of the ways in which the character of modern war affects international diplomacy.

The author begins by studying the limited wars that were possible in the age of absolute rulers, and the destructive impact of revolutionary and democratic government on this state of affairs. Not only did the new armies of the Napoleonic age grow immensely in size and military power: the aims for which the war was fought began to change.Now it is no longer a question of forcing the enemy government to change its policy in specific ways: the purpose is the destruction of that government and the absolute surrender of its people.

Such a concept of war, the author contends, is a disastrous return to barbarism. Each war leads inevitably to a state of instability which will persist and worsen until a new conflict breaks out.